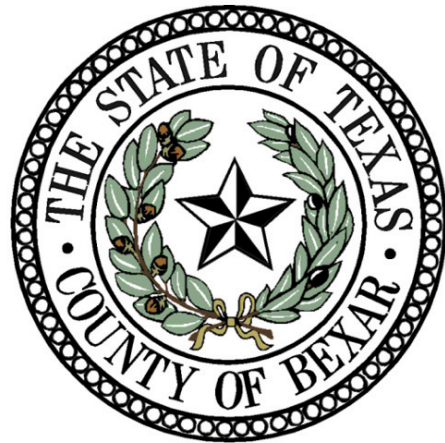


City of San Antonio/Bexar County  
Citizens Commission on City/County  
Service Integration



Preliminary Recommendations

April 22, 2004

# Citizens Commission on City/County Service Integration

Glen Hartman  
Commission Chair

## City Appointees

Steven A. Bennett  
Administrative Support Services

Felix Castellano  
Health and Human Services  
Planning and Urban Development

Rebecca Q. Cedillo  
Chair, Utilities, Public Works and  
Environmental Services

Joyce Dorrycott *[resigned]*  
Administrative Support Services

Terrence Hayes *[resigned]*  
Recreation and Leisure Services

Frances K. Mabry  
Health and Human Services

Doug McMurry  
Chair, Recreation and Leisure Services

David Peterson  
Recreation and Leisure Services

Ronald E. Rocha  
Utilities, Public Works and Environmental  
Services

Catherine Torres-Stahl  
Public Safety

Susan M. Wright  
Chair, Planning and Urban Development  
Community Education

## County Appointees

Carole Abitz  
Utilities, Public Works and Environmental Services

Mary Lee Buettner  
Planning and Urban Development

Bert Cecconi  
Administrative Support Services  
Public Safety

Jeffrey A. Dean  
Chair, Public Safety  
Health and Human Services

Doug Harlan  
Chair, Community Education  
Chair, Health and Human Services

Mark McBriarty *[resigned]*  
Administrative Support Services

Sheila McNeil  
Planning and Urban Development  
Public Safety

EZ Mull *[Alternate for Gerry Rickhoff]*  
Administrative Support Services

David Palmer  
Community Education  
Recreation and Leisure Services

Gerry Rickhoff, County Clerk  
Administrative Support Services

Norma Rodriguez  
Chair, Administrative Support Services

Glenn S. Snider  
Utilities, Public Works and Environmental Services

Harold Tillman  
Utilities, Public Works and Environmental Services

Dr. Tom Brereton  
Commission Consultant

## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
Honorable County Judge and County Commissioners:

I hereby submit the Preliminary Report of the Citizens Commission on City/County Service Integration. This report contains some two dozen recommendations for integrating services provided by the City, the County and the San Antonio River Authority to the citizens they serve. These recommendations were developed based on research and interviews with at least 79 different departmental supervisors, administrators, technicians and other supporting staff personnel, and on our discussions in nearly 50 meetings of the Commission and its subcommittees since our first meeting on October 28, 2003.

We hope that the recommendations contained in this report will prove useful in preparing your respective budgets for the coming fiscal year. However, the Commission did not have sufficient time to complete one of the tasks set forth in your mandate to us: to develop the proposed legislation that will be needed to implement some of our recommendations. With your consent, we intend to continue working on this task and to complete it in time for your consideration of your respective legislative agendas in the fall.

Furthermore, as we point out in the text of the report, we believe some of these Preliminary Recommendations require further study before they are finalized or can be fully implemented. All too frequently, recommendations by commissions and study groups are overcome by events and the focus is lost. We therefore suggest that some form of follow-up group or successor Commission be established to monitor implementation of these recommendations, to ensure that the momentum we have established is continued.

We have found that the greatest difficulty in integrating the functions of the City and the County derives from the different cultures that are reflected in Texas municipal and county government. Although much progress has been made in the last few years to overcome these differences, we believe that further attitudinal adjustment between the two entities will be needed in the future.

I appreciate the opportunity you have given me to serve in this endeavor.

Respectfully submitted,

Glen Hartman  
Chairman



# Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION.....	1
RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING LEGISLATION .....	3
City-County Health Authority .....	3
City and County Social Services.....	4
San Antonio/Bexar County History Center .....	5
RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT.....	6
City and County Housing Authorities.....	6
County CDBG Administration.....	7
Subdivision Development Process .....	8
Countywide 3-1-1 System.....	9
Satellite Service Offices.....	10
Regional Police Training Academy .....	11
Central Jury Pool.....	13
Park Security .....	14
S.A.R.A. Park Reservations .....	15
City and County Human Resources .....	16
Geographic Information Systems.....	17
Countywide Household Hazardous Waste Collection .....	18
County Illegal Dumping.....	19
County Traffic Signals Operation and Maintenance.....	20
RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION.....	21
Coordinated Parks Policies .....	21
Flood Control .....	22
County Streets and Roads Maintenance.....	23
Library Book Purchases .....	24
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CITY-COUNTY SERVICE INTEGRATION.....	25
Continuing City-County Service Integration .....	25
City-County Technology Purchasing.....	26
Integration of Quality of Life Services .....	27
Marketing of City Services .....	29

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Commission gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the many officials and staff of the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and other local governments who have aided in our work. Foremost among these are the following staff of the City’s Department of External Relations and the Office of the County Judge, all of whom spent many hours of overtime in direct support of the Commission.

<b>City of San Antonio External Relations Department</b>	<b>Bexar County Office of the County Judge</b>
Jim Campbell Director	Seth Mitchell Chief of Staff
Ray Baray Intergovernmental Relations Manager	Cindy Segovia Senior Analyst
Alejandra Lopez Special Projects Coordinator	

In nearly 50 meetings, the Commission and its subcommittees received many hours of briefings and engaged in candid dialogue with staff from throughout the City and County governmental structures and from other agencies and private sector organizations. A complete list of these cannot be compiled, but the following are noted in various Commission documents and working papers. Many of them participated in several meetings and briefed several subcommittees.

### City Officials and Staff

Ken Appedole, Parking Manager, Public Works  
 Rocky Aranda, Street Maintenance Manager, Public Works  
 Lisa Biediger, Assistant City Attorney  
 Melvin L. Braziel, Interim President and CEO, San Antonio Housing Authority  
 Dennis Campa, Director, Community Initiatives  
 Janie B. Cantu, Director, Purchasing and General Services  
 Daniel Cardenas, Director, Environmental Services  
 Joe Chapa, Assistant Director, GIS, Information Technology Services  
 Jason Cosby, Assistant Director, Public Works  
 Rudy Davila, Abatement Officer, Code Compliance  
 Diane Galvan, Communications Manager, External Relations  
 Aubrey George, Acting Director, San Antonio Public Library  
 Frances Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager  
 Dr. Fernando A. Guerra, Director, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District  
 Ed Guzman, Planning Manager, Development Services  
 Kent Hickingbottom, Traffic Operations Supervisor, Public Works  
 Rodney Hitzfelder, Deputy Chief, Fire Department  
 Lou Lendman, Director, Management and Budget  
 Manuel Longoria, Assistant Director, Economic Development  
 Malcolm Matthews, Director, Parks and Recreation  
 Gary Moeller, Director, Information Technology Services

Dr. Michael McMains, Director, Victim Advocacy, San Antonio Police Department  
Mike Miller, Assistant Chief, Fire Department  
Steven Morando, Assistant Director for Operations, Purchasing and General Services  
David Newman, Manager, Environmental Management Division, Environmental Services  
John Nicholas, San Antonio Public Library Board of Trustees  
Bob Optiz, Engineer, Development Services  
Albert Ortiz, Chief of Police  
Ozward Parker, Purchasing Manager, Purchasing and General Services  
Florencio Pena, Director, Development Services  
David Preciado, Jury Pool Coordinator, Municipal Court  
Rod Sanchez, Assistant Director, Development Services  
Sam Sanchez, Chief, Food and Environmental Health Services, S.A. Metropolitan Health District  
Roberta Sparks, Special Projects Coordinator, San Antonio Public Library  
Tom Wendorf, Director, Public Works  
Veronica Zertuche, Deputy City Attorney

#### County Officials and Staff

Art Buford, Fleet Maintenance Manager, Infrastructure Services  
Amelia Cardona-Flores, Central Jury Room Bailiff  
Jose E. Castillo, Executive Director, Housing and Human Services  
David Chavez, Section Chief, County Parks Division, Infrastructure Services  
Christina De La Cruz, P.E., Development Services Engineer, Infrastructure Services  
Gary Del Valle, Fleet Maintenance, Sheriff's Office  
Dr. Vincent Di Maio, Chief Medical Examiner  
Yvonne Escamilla, Bexar County Public Information Officer  
Tim Fallon, Crime Lab Manager, Criminal Investigation Laboratory  
Renee D. Green, Director, Environmental Services Division, Infrastructure Services  
Cynthia Jahn, Victim Advocate, Family Justice and Victim Assistance, District Attorney's Office  
S. Marcus Jahns, Executive Director/Budget Officer, Planning and Resource Management  
Les Locke, P.E., County Engineer, Infrastructure Services  
Ralph Lopez, Bexar County Sheriff  
Chuck Martinez, Grants & Economic Coordinator, Planning and Resource Management  
George Hernandez, Legal Counsel, University Health System  
Madonna Minarich, Deputy Chief, Support Services, Sheriff's Office  
Linda Miranda, Crime Victim Liaison, Sheriff's Office  
Carl Mixon, County Fire Marshal  
Laura Morales, Acting Executive Director, Housing Authority of Bexar County  
Dr. David J. Morgan, Chief Information Officer  
Gabriel Perez, Executive Director, Infrastructure Services  
Mary E. Quinones, Acting Purchasing Agent  
Alfred Rodriguez, County Archivist, County Clerk's Office  
Veronica Saucedo, Human Resources Manager, Planning and Resource Management  
David Smith, Budget Manager, Planning and Resource Management  
Juan F. Solis III, Facility Maintenance Manager, Infrastructure Services  
Jeff Turner, Chief Executive Officer, University Health System  
Renee Watson, SMWBE Program Manager, Planning and Resource Management

#### Other Agency Staff

Dale Bransford, Manager, Parks Service, San Antonio River Authority  
Stephen T. Graham, Director of Watershed Management, San Antonio River Authority  
David J. Harris, City Administrator, City of Hill Country Village  
Al Notzon, Executive Director, Alamo Area Council of Governments  
Susan Rash, City Manager, City of Alamo Heights  
Gregory E. Rothe, General Manager, San Antonio River Authority  
Drew Traeger, City Manager, City of Hollywood Park  
Pat Wright, Public Works Director, City of Leon Valley

#### Other Organizations

Ruth Agather, Chair, Blue Ribbon Commission on a San Antonio/Bexar County History Center  
Marco A. Barros, Executive Director, San Antonio Area Tourism Council  
Steve Hanan, Chair, Development Process Committee, Real Estate Council of San Antonio  
Nicholas Hollis, Chair, San Antonio Public Library Foundation  
Maria Pfeiffer, Blue Ribbon Commission on a San Antonio/Bexar County History Center  
Boone Powell, The Friends of Catherine H. Powell



## **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

The Citizens Commission on City/County Service Integration was appointed in October 2003 by the San Antonio City Council and Bexar County Commissioners Court. It consists of 23 members, including 11 appointed by City Council, 11 appointed by Commissioners Court, and the Chair appointed jointly by Mayor Ed Garza and County Judge Nelson Wolff.

The Commission was created against the background of the failure of efforts in the 1990s to achieve formal structural consolidation of city and county governments and the limited but increasing success of efforts since 2001 to integrate city and county services through interlocal contracts and agreements. Its objective is to achieve more substantial benefits in the efficiency, effectiveness, equity and accountability of both governments while continuing to maintain their separate identity as two distinct governments with overlapping jurisdictions. It is also to make local government more seamless and transparent to the citizens who are the taxpayers of both governments.

The Commission was charged to:

- (1) Review best practices and models of service integration from other communities, including the role of special districts and authorities alongside city and county governments;
- (2) Develop and implement community education programs on the desirability of functional consolidation of City and County services;
- (3) Recommend a plan to transfer and consolidate functions and services between the city and county governments and other special districts that is equitable to both city and county taxpayers; and
- (4) Develop a draft of any state legislation that may be needed to implement the Commission's recommendations.

The Commission has conducted extensive research into the existing structure and functioning of our city and county governments, including many hours of detailed briefings and discussions with a large number of staff from the City, the County and other local governments. It has studied the historical development of city and county governments in Texas and considered academic research on "best practices" in the assignment of functions among local governments in a metropolitan area.

In order to examine the full universe of city and county services, the Commission divided into six subcommittees to study the following functional areas:

- Public Safety B including law enforcement, fire, EMS, emergency operations and related services;
- Administrative Support Services B including personnel, purchasing, information services, records management and related services;

- Health and Human Resources B including the Metropolitan Health District, University Health System, City Community Initiatives and related services;
- Utilities, Public Works and Environmental Services B including stormwater, drainage and flood control, solid waste collection and disposal, air quality, water supply, sewage treatment, streets and highways, and related services;
- Planning and Urban Development B including planning, housing, CDBG administration, economic development and related services; and
- Recreation and Leisure Services B including parks and recreation, libraries, tourism, arts and cultural programs, entertainment and related services.

The Commission also created a Community Education Subcommittee to organize “town hall” meetings on possible Commission recommendations, develop community education programs through the mass media, and conduct related information and outreach programs. A number of Commission members served on more than one of these subcommittees.

The governing bodies that appointed the Commission asked it to submit preliminary recommendations in time for them to be considered in developing the City’s and County’s budgets for FY 2005. This means by the beginning of May 2004. The Commission has been severely tested by the ambitiousness of this schedule.

This document is the Commission’s preliminary report, containing its recommendations as far as it has been possible to develop them under this deadline. For clarity and ease of understanding, these recommendations are divided into four main sections: (1) those that the Commission believes will require new state legislation before they can be implemented (or fully implemented), (2) those that will require a formal interlocal agreement adopted by City Council and Commissioners Court, (3) those that can be implemented by administrative action alone, and (4) several concluding recommendations on the future of the city-county service integration effort.

This document does not contain the outline of the legislation that may be required to implement these recommendations. The Commission simply has not had time to consider these issues, or to obtain the advice of the City Attorney and the District Attorney’s Civil Section on this matter. The Commission expects to address this part of its mandate following the presentation of this report in May, and on a schedule that will allow these items to be considered as Council and Commissioners Court develop their respective 2005 state legislative programs.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING LEGISLATION**

### **City-County Health Authority**

**The City and County should place the Metropolitan Health District, the University Health System, the Medical Examiner, and the Forensics Lab under the governance of a single city-county health authority, governed by an independent board akin to the current University Health System board. This authority should also play a stronger role in establishing standards for Emergency Medical Service in suburban cities and the unincorporated area.**

#### Rationale

In theory, the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District's primary mission is disease prevention, while the University Health System's functions are patient care and participation in the training of new health care professionals. In practice, the boundary between prevention and treatment has become blurred, as UHS has developed substantial roles in prevention as part of a coordinated approach to reducing the need for care.

The Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office investigates the deaths of Bexar County citizens who die suddenly, violently, or unexpectedly, in order to determine the cause and manner of death. The Bexar County Crime Lab provides forensic support to County law enforcement and by contract to the City of San Antonio, to some law enforcement agencies elsewhere in Texas and even outside of Texas on a fee-for-service basis. Both of these agencies have the potential to improve and expand their services and to achieve economies of scale by marketing their services to more agencies outside Bexar County. Placing them under the structure of an overall city-county health authority could help develop a new "center of excellence" in forensic sciences as a substantial component of San Antonio's medical-related industries.

At present, the structure of service delivery in EMS is highly fragmented. The City of San Antonio delivers a very high quality of service through its Fire Department, with two fully trained paramedics in each EMS unit. Various suburban cities provide their own EMS directly, contract with each other for service, contract with San Antonio, or contract with a private sector provider. UHS contracts with a private sector firm for service in the unincorporated area. The development of Emergency Service Districts blanketing the unincorporated area may further complicate this pattern.

#### Implementation

Legislation would be required (1) to integrate the University Health System and the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, (2) to include the Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office and the Bexar County Crime Lab as components of the authority, and (3) to grant the authority power to evaluate local EMS services and establish standards for training and service delivery.

## **City and County Social Services**

**The City's Department of Community Initiatives and the County's Department of Housing and Human Services should be administratively integrated to the maximum possible degree. Pending formal structural reorganization, their services should be co-located (along with appropriate state agencies) at locations where citizens should be able to apply for all available forms of assistance, and one application form should cover all kinds of assistance needed.**

### Rationale

The City's Department of Community Initiatives and the County's Department of Housing and Human Services, both directly and through delegate agencies, provide various kinds of assistance to citizens in economic need, ranging from child care and youth services to programs aiding senior citizens. The services also entail training, education, and direct-assistance programs to improve nutrition, resolve temporary housing problems, and help in emergency situations with utility bills and mortgage payments. Many of the services provided are funded, at least in part, by state or federal agencies.

Under current circumstances, a citizen in need of help must contact (and, in some instances, go to) at least two separate places to apply for assistance, and, depending upon the need, there are two places to go for *each* kind of assistance needed B e.g., utility assistance, rent assistance, mortgage payment assistance, etc.

The integrated agency in charge of human services should emphasize marketing its services to the constituents it serves, with the aim of better informing citizens of what services are available in time of need and where to go to obtain them. Simplifying application procedures and expediting delivery of the services should be principal goals of the new agency.

### Implementation

Co-location of parallel City and County agencies can be accomplished by interlocal agreement. However, structural integration may require various amendments to state and federal legislation and/or regulations and approval by the state and federal agencies that fund these services.

- Staff exploration of alternatives for co-location of services and development of an implementation plan should be an element of the FY 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation.
- Implementation of a pilot social services "One-Stop Center" should be targeted for FY 2006.
- Structural consolidation of administration may have to proceed incrementally, as approvals are obtained for particular services.

## **San Antonio/Bexar County History Center**

**The City and the County should complete the necessary feasibility studies and enter into a partnership to develop and manage a San Antonio/Bexar County History Center.**

### Rationale

The City and the County have both supported an initiative to create a San Antonio/Bexar County History Center through the creation of the Blue Ribbon Commission to conduct feasibility studies and develop a plan for implementation. The Commission has recommended a two-part “center” including an archival research facility and a “gateway” museum of local history which would orient visitors to the rich historical resources that are available at other locations. In November 2003, City and County voters both approved parallel bond issues that are the first steps toward implementation.

Studies of the “program” content for both components of the Center have been funded by previous City and County appropriations and should be completed under the direction of the Blue Ribbon Commission by the end of calendar 2004.

### Implementation

New legislation will likely be needed (1) to give the City and County the authority to create a board of directors for a permanent joint agency, (2) to authorize a secure, long-term dedicated funding source, and (3) to address the statutory obligations of the City Clerk and County Clerk as the custodians of archival records of important historic interest. This legislation should be included in the City’s and County’s 2005 legislative agendas if the Blue Ribbon Commission can develop it in time.

The City and County governments should look closely at the former Hertzberg Museum building and the adjoining property owned by SAWS for the establishment of the Center. The Blue Ribbon Commission’s initial recommendation was to use the Hertzberg as the location for the museum component and to locate the archival center at some other site. However, the Hertzberg may actually be more suitable to the archival function, and it is subject to a deed restriction that requires it to be used as a public library. Redevelopment of part of the adjacent SAWS property as the museum component could make this one of the premier tourist destinations in San Antonio.

At the same time, other possible configurations and partnerships should continue to be explored – for example, possible partnerships with UTSA’s Institute of Texan Cultures, or with the Witte Museum, and with private sector organizations such as those interested in western art.

The importance of the San Antonio Public Library’s Texana/Genealogy collection to the mission of the History Center and the deed restriction on the Hertzberg building both also suggest some kind of relationship between the governing board of the History Center and the SAPL or a county library district.

Physical development of facilities should be a proposition in the next round of City and County general obligation bonds.

# **RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT**

## **City and County Housing Authorities**

**The San Antonio Housing Authority and the Housing Authority of Bexar County should be consolidated into a single city-county housing authority. Pending this structural reorganization, HABC should contract with SAHA for administration of all its programs.**

### Rationale

The two housing authorities perform identical functions through duplicate administrative structures. In 1996, HABC contracted with SAHA for administration of HABC's Section 8 leased housing program, which is nearly its entire operation. This agreement lasted approximately three years and resulted in administrative cost savings to HABC. However, the agreement was discontinued upon the expiration of its initial term. Recently both agencies have come under public scrutiny and they are in the process of restructuring their executive leadership.

### Implementation

The respective boards should instruct their staffs to negotiate the required interlocal agreement to contract for services before the end of calendar 2004.

The Commission understands that statutory authority already exists to create a regional housing authority by joint resolutions of the City Council and Commissioners Court. However, this consolidation will also require administrative approval by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## **County CDBG Administration**

**Bexar County should contract for administration and monitoring of its CDBG program (except for direct County government capital improvements) by the City. This recommendation entails no change in the decision-making authority to allocate funds by the Commissioners Court.**

### Rationale

Bexar County (along with 13 partner suburban cities) is an “entitlement” community which receives \$2 million in CDBG formula grants each year. These funds are used for low/moderate income housing rehabilitation, construction of public facilities, water, sewer and street reconstruction projects, provision of public services, and removal of architectural barriers.

At the same time, the City of San Antonio receives \$17.7 million in CDBG funds, \$7.4 million in Home Investment Partnership (HOME) grants, and other grants for Emergency Shelter and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS.

For both governments, the cost of administration of the CDBG program comes out of the formula grant itself, and thus reduces dollar-for-dollar the funds that are actually available to deliver services. The Commission believes the County (and possibly the City) could achieve economies in this cost, and thus stretch the effective value of the grant funds available, by contracting with the larger and deeper City staff for administration and monitoring of the sub-grantees who ultimately spend these funds to implement essentially similar projects.

### Implementation

Exploration and development of an interlocal agreement to implement this recommendation should be part of the FY 2005 work program for City-County Cooperation. If necessary, incremental agreements might address individual categories of CDBG program expenditures. Administrative approval by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is also required, but should not be a major obstacle.

## **Subdivision Development Process**

**The City and County should amend their interlocal agreement under HB 1445 to make the County a “reviewing agency” for subdivision plats, thereby falling under the City’s Unified Development Code time limits for review. The Commissioners Court should “approve” plats during that review period. A joint plat application and fee process should be established with consistent fees. Additionally, the County should adopt the subdivision regulations of the UDC to ensure consistent code enforcement throughout the ETJ and the unincorporated area.**

### Rationale

House Bill 1445 (2001) required the City and County to adopt an interlocal agreement to eliminate the obvious duplication in the review of subdivision plats in the extra-territorial jurisdiction. However, the current joint submittal and approval process still results in a duplication of most reviews by the City and County. In a true “one stop” at the Development Services Center, County reviewers should office at the Development and Business Services Center and review subdivision plats side-by-side with City reviewers.

The existing agreement also allows for separate County approval of all plats requiring variances to the UDC. This creates a dual approval process that could result in conflicting decisions by the City and the County. With prior approval during the review, the final approval of *all* plats within the ETJ would remain with the City’s Planning Commission.

There is no apparent justification for the County to apply different subdivision standards in the unincorporated area inside and outside the City’s ETJ. However, the subdivision standards of the City’s Unified Development Code may not be totally appropriate in rural areas outside the City’s ETJ. Development of appropriate amendments to coordinate the UDC and the County’s subdivision standards into a single truly “unified” development code for Bexar County may be a complex and time-consuming process.

The existing agreement also does not address duplication – and conflicting standards – in post-platting inspection issues.

### Implementation

County reviewers should immediately transfer to available space at the “One Stop Center.” City and County staff should negotiate the conflicts in inspection standards and make any necessary adjustments before the end of FY 2004.

Development of a truly “unified” development code for subdivisions outside the city limits – both inside and outside the City’s ETJ – should be a major component of the work program for the Plan for City-County Cooperation. Appropriate amendments to City and County standards should be adopted by the end of calendar 2004.

If the City and County cannot agree on expanding the terms of the interlocal agreement under HB 1445, legislation should be considered which would require integration of the *entire* development process rather than limiting the integration to plat approval.



## **Countywide 3-1-1 System**

**The City's 3-1-1 program should be expanded to include all County services.**

### Rationale

The City operates a "24/7" 3-1-1 program which serves as a general information resource and which tracks problem calls for its citizens. The launching of this service has been extremely well received by city residents. However, the County has no equivalent to this service. A significant proportion of calls to the City's 3-1-1 service line involve County services. The average citizen has no idea which services are provided by which government, and in many cases no idea whether a particular problem area is inside or outside the city limits. *Implementation of this recommendation would do more to make City and County government seamless and transparent to the average citizen than any other recommendation in this report.*

### Implementation

Many significant technical issues must be resolved in order to implement this recommendation. These include upgrading the County's technology for tracking citizen service requests and "re-engineering" many of the County's internal procedures for addressing them.

The required feasibility studies are already programmed in the FY 2004 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. The City and County should aim to develop and adopt an interlocal agreement to implement this recommendation during FY 2005.

## **Satellite Service Offices**

**The City's Community Link Service Centers and the County's scattered satellite offices should be combined into a network of service centers where citizens can conduct all kinds of routine business with the City and County governments at a single location. These consolidated service centers should also include CPS, SAWS, and Bexar Metropolitan Water District.**

### Rationale

The City has a network of Community Link Service Centers where citizens can conduct a wide variety of transactions with the city government. The personnel at these centers are extensively cross-trained to make city government as transparent and user-friendly as possible. Meanwhile the County has a series of scattered decentralized offices to facilitate individual departments' respective services to County citizens.

The San Antonio Water System and City Public Service also have decentralized offices for citizen service. Some of these are co-located.

During development of the 2003 County bond issue, consideration was given to developing a series of general-purpose satellite offices to consolidate all of the County's citizen service offices at a single location in each Commissioner's precinct. However, sufficient funding was not available to place such a proposition on the ballot.

The FY 2004 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation includes exploring the potential for developing a combined city-county service center as a pilot project in the high growth area around Bandera Road and Loop 1604.

### Implementation

Exploration of expanding the Community Link Service Centers to include County services should be an element of the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. An appropriate interlocal agreement should be negotiated and implemented by FY 2006.

Pending development of new physical facilities, County services should be integrated with the Community Link Service Centers as much as possible through co-location in leased space, cross-training of employees, and use of appropriate technology to ease access to service delivery.

Bexar County should complete a financial feasibility study of the recommended consolidated service centers in the course of planning for the next County general obligation bond issue.

## **Regional Police Training Academy**

**The Sheriff's training academy and the AACOG training academy should be integrated into the City's training academy as a regional training facility. This regional academy should also have a formal relationship with the degree-granting program of the Alamo Community College District.**

### Rationale

At present there are four service structures for police training in the region: the San Antonio Police Academy, the Bexar County Sheriff's Academy, the Alamo Area Council of Governments' Regional Law Enforcement Academy, and the San Antonio College Law Enforcement Academy. All of them provide the basic training required for state certification as a peace officer. The SAPD and the Sheriff's academy provide additional training and instruction that is specially tailored to their departments' operations and procedures. The duplication in these structures serves no particularly obvious or valid purpose. The SAPD Training Academy is located on an ample site and was designed to allow for expansion to serve as a regional training academy.

### Implementation

The Commission believes an interlocal agreement involving the City, the County Sheriff and AACOG could be developed under existing law. However, legislation may be needed to authorize the transfer of state funding that currently supports the training program at San Antonio College to offset the cost of operating a regional training facility.

The Commission also recognizes that development of a plan to implement this recommendation will be a uniquely complex and pioneering undertaking. Therefore we also recommend that this project should be overseen by a "Committee of Six" consisting of the San Antonio Chief of Police, the Bexar County Sheriff, AACOG's Criminal Justice Director, a representative of the surrounding 11 counties, a representative of the suburban and other cities in the region, and a representative of the Alamo Community College District.

Special consideration should be given to the fair share cost of operating such a facility, i.e., the County or a suburban city should pay a fair price for employee training to be determined by the Committee of Six. Additional classrooms and administrative offices will be needed to accommodate the transfer of cadets from the existing AACOG and County training facilities.

Another special consideration is to determine how cadets are to be paid and/or to pay for training. The City and County provide cadets a full salary during training and pay all of the costs of training. AACOG and San Antonio College require cadets/students to pay for their own training. The cost for basic TCLEOSE certification at AACOG is \$1,200 for 957 hours of training.

Implementation of this recommendation would also have to conform to the requirements of the City's union contract with the San Antonio Police Officers Association.

Initial explorations of the feasibility of this recommendation should be undertaken within the context of the FY 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. An actual agreement probably cannot be implemented before FY 2007 at the earliest. In addition, capital improvements will be required to implement this project.

## **Central Jury Pool**

**The City and County should enter into an interlocal agreement to provide for jurors in Municipal Court to be selected from the citizens responding to the County's call to jury service.**

### Rationale

Bexar County has a central jury pool for all of the state and county courts that are part of the county government: 24 district courts, 12 county courts, 2 probate courts, 5 justice of the peace courts, 1 magistrate court and 1 criminal impact court. The City duplicates the County's entire process of selecting a jury pool for the occasional jury trial in Municipal Court, which occurs on average once a week. In addition to this useless duplication of administrative effort, individual citizens may thus be called to jury service for both governmental entities within the time span that allows an exemption from repeated service.

### Implementation

This should be a relatively simple agreement to negotiate and implement. It is reasonable to expect full implementation by early in FY 2005.

Although the essential substance of this recommendation can be implemented easily, a minor amendment to state law is also desirable to count recent jury service in Municipal Court as an exemption from a repeated call. This should be part of the City's and County's 2005 legislative agendas.

## **Park Security**

**Bexar County and the San Antonio River Authority should enter into an interlocal agreement to provide security at all the parks in Bexar County through the San Antonio Parks Police.**

### Rationale

The City of San Antonio operates and maintains by far the largest park system in Bexar County. In addition to traditional city parks, the City has been acquiring and preserving as open space lands over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone under the Proposition 3 sales tax initiative – much of which is outside the city limits.

At the same time, Bexar County operates a network of County parks which are principally facilities for family and group events. All but one of these parks is inside the city limits, and the exception is at the city boundary.

In addition, the San Antonio River Authority operates the parks at Braunig and Calaveras Lakes under long-term contract to City Public Service, which owns the lakes as cooling facilities for its electric generating plants.

In the face of this fragmented structure of service delivery, City, County and SARA parks are all totally indistinguishable in the average citizen's mind.

Security at city parks is provided through the City's specially trained Parks Police, which is a separate force from the San Antonio Police Department. Security at the other parks is provided as necessary (and as available) by the Sheriff's Department and county constables. The Commission believes that the tasks of policing parks are somewhat different from traditional police roles, and that sheriff's deputies and constables are not well equipped for these roles.

### Implementation

Exploration of the required interlocal agreement should be an element of the FY 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. Determination of the budget impacts on the County and SARA must be part of this study.

## **S.A.R.A. Park Reservations**

**The San Antonio River Authority's parks should be included in the consolidated central reservations system.**

### Rationale

Since 1997, Bexar County has contracted with the City for management of a consolidated reservations system for facilities at all City and County parks. SARA's parks at Braunig and Calaveras Lakes are not part of this system. This exclusion simply makes no sense.

### Implementation

The interlocal agreement to add SARA's two parks should be a relatively simple one to negotiate. Adoption and implementation should be expected early in FY 2005.

## **City and County Human Resources**

**The City's and County's Departments of Human Resources should be administratively consolidated in some form.**

### Rationale

The Human Resource Departments of the City and County governments necessarily perform similar functions of advertising personnel vacancies, processing employment applications, handling personnel matters, and managing employee records and benefit programs, including health benefits.

Administrative consolidation should produce improve efficiency in advertising vacancies, processing and screening applicants, maintaining records, and, perhaps, in securing higher quality employee benefits, such as health care. It would also serve applicants more effectively and efficiently and improve both governments' ability to pair them with appropriate open positions.

### Implementation

Alternatives for consolidation of these services should be explored in the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. An appropriate interlocal agreement should be concluded by FY 2006.



## **Geographic Information Systems**

**Bexar County should enter into an interlocal agreement with the City of San Antonio to allow for information development and exchange in the Geographic Information System (GIS) that the City operates.**

### Rationale

Currently the City's GIS layers are complete within the city limits and the extra-territorial jurisdiction. By combining data and mapping from the County providers, information will be complete for the unincorporated area prepared with the same standards and opportunities for exchange of information. The costs saved will be determined by the amount of data made available to the County by the City, in order to insure that nothing is duplicated. In addition, the City already acquires data from other agencies and formats it in a manner that would be useful to County departments. This is a savings for the County, rather than acquiring the same data from outside agencies and formatting it themselves.

### Implementation

Development of the required interlocal agreement is already included in the FY 2004 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. The County's Needs Assessment should be completed before the end of FY 2004 and the agreement should be implemented in FY 2005. The Commission believes that this agreement should be modeled after the Radio System, with a Joint Operating Committee or some similar successful structure.

A commitment by the County to provide permanent funding to maintain the level of excellence necessary for upkeep of the system is imperative. The interlocal agreement should establish the procedures and timing for data availability for use by the County. It should cover use of servers, data storage and aerial photography storage. It should also confirm how the data will be delivered to the users by fiber optic or other means. In addition, the County must provide for the application development needs specific to Bexar County, to connect into existing County data that is not available through the City.

## **Countywide Household Hazardous Waste Collection**

**The City should develop agreements which would enable suburban residents to utilize the City's household hazardous waste drop-off center with minimal or no on-site charge to them.**

### Rationale

The City of San Antonio operates a household hazardous waste drop-off center at 7030 Culebra. The center is open Thursdays, Fridays, and the first Saturday of each month at no charge to San Antonio residents showing a copy of a recent City Public Service bill as proof of residence. This is an important program to minimize illegal dumping and pollution of the environment.

Bexar County provides no solid waste or recycling services in the unincorporated areas, although various incorporated entities have their own arrangements. Residents in the unincorporated areas make their own arrangements for waste disposal. Except for some businesses or large farming operations, which may have separate arrangements to dispose of hazardous waste, all other residential waste (including recyclables and household hazardous waste) is mixed and disposed of together. The County has about 20 community clean-ups per year at various locations identified by County Commissioners. During these clean-ups, people can drop off their waste at designated locations, and it is picked up by the County and disposed of properly.

### Implementation

This recommendation might be implemented either by a single agreement with Bexar County for the entire area outside the city limits (similar to the existing library contract), or by separate agreements for the unincorporated area and individual suburban municipalities. In either case, equitable financing of this extension of city services to the residents outside the city limits must be considered carefully to ensure that city taxpayers are not asked to subsidize suburban services.

Negotiation and adoption of this agreement should be included in the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. Implementation should be completed by the beginning of FY 2006.

## **County Illegal Dumping**

**To avoid duplication of specialized equipment, Bexar County should contract with the City of San Antonio for the use of City crews and equipment to clean-up illegal dump sites in the unincorporated area. In the meantime, it should also seek greater legal authority and flexibility in combating illegal dumping as part of its 2005 legislative agenda.**

### Rationale

Bexar County is limited in legal authority, staff and funding to combat illegal dumping in the unincorporated area. The County's three main goals are to abate junk vehicles, to prevent and abate nuisances within platted subdivisions, and to abate nuisances within 50 feet of a public right-of-way. Other complaints consist of weeds, trash and septic tank leaks on private property. The process to abate such complaints is cumbersome. The County must give notice to the owner of the property to remove the nuisance within 30 days. If the nuisance is not abated, the County may then file a complaint with the Justice of the Peace Court. The time period for a hearing is usually 6-8 months. After the hearing the County may then abate the nuisance and bill the owner.

The City of San Antonio's Code Compliance Department is provided with more manpower and capital. The city receives notice of illegal dumping both through the 3-1-1 system and through citizens calling the Code Compliance Department directly. Code Compliance Officers will send a Notice of Violation with an affidavit to support prosecution of the violator in Municipal Court if the violation is not abated.

The Commission believes the County could achieve economies in clean-up costs by contracting with the City for this service. These would be greater if the Commission's recommendation on the 3-1-1 system is implemented at the same time.

### Implementation

An appropriate interlocal agreement should be developed in the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. However, legislation is required to address the limitations of County's legal authority, Section 365.017 of the Health and Safety Code.

## **County Traffic Signals Operation and Maintenance**

**Bexar County should explore the potential for economies in the maintenance of traffic lights and flashers and installation/maintenance of traffic control signs and pavement markings in the unincorporated area by contracting with the City for these services.**

### Rationale

The County has five traffic lights, five general flashers and 52 school flashers in the unincorporated area. All are contracted out for maintenance. Other sign development such as work zones, bike paths, speed limits, pavement markings and decals are created in-house.

The City uses in-house forces to construct, install, operate and repair all electronic signals in the city and to develop other safety signs and markings on all pavement rights-of-way.

### Implementation

Staff exploration of this issue should begin in FY 2004. If results are positive, negotiation and adoption of this agreement should be included in the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. Implementation should be completed by the beginning of FY 2006.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS REQUIRING ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

### **Coordinated Parks Policies**

**The City, the County and the San Antonio River Authority should adopt a consistent set of rules and practices to govern parks throughout Bexar County.**

#### Rationale

Under the present structure of multiple park systems, City Council, Commissioners Court and SARA separately determine the rules and policies governing such things as pets, deposits, alcohol consumption and hours of operation. While different types of parks may require specially tailored rules, arbitrary differences between these policies create citizen confusion and serve no useful purpose.

#### Implementation

A uniform set of rules and practices should be developed by a joint City-County-SARA task force similar to the City-County task force that developed the common policy on tax abatements. This task force should be charged to report before the end of calendar 2004.

## **Flood Control**

**A third iteration of the Countywide Citizens' Watershed Committee, with as many of the original members as possible, should be established in FY 2008 to review the effectiveness of the existing interlocal agreement on flood control after its first few years of functioning. Their report should recommend needed revisions to the agreement or the establishment of a separate entity.**

### Rationale

Bexar County levies a dedicated property tax for flood control. It contracts with the San Antonio River Authority for the design and construction of flood control improvements along the San Antonio River and its tributaries. SARA in turn is the local partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for improvements authorized by the U.S. Congress.

The City of San Antonio, along with other municipalities in Bexar County, is responsible for local drainage improvements. These are typically funded by City general obligation bond issues and implemented through the City public works department.

After the disaster of the October 1998 floods, the City and County created a Countywide Citizens Watershed Master Plan Committee which recommended consideration of "a single entity, system or structure" to coordinate all flood control and drainage improvements in the community. A follow-up Implementation Committee resulted in an interlocal agreement creating the "Committee of Six" (now being expanded to a Committee of Seven) to coordinate City, County and SARA projects through a structure resembling the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation improvements.

### Implementation

Initial coordination efforts have concentrated on the issue of flood control. However, the interlocal agreement states that this partnership is also to cover the issues of water quality and stormwater management. The San Antonio Water System is a partner with the City regarding water quality and stormwater issues, but SAWS is not mentioned in the interlocal agreement. An addendum should be added to the agreement to spell out the relationship and activities of SAWS in the context of the larger issue.

## **County Streets and Roads Maintenance**

**Bexar County should “ride” the City’s bids for paving and street/road repair materials as much as possible.**

### Rationale

The City and the County use largely identical materials for street paving, bridge and guardrail maintenance, and sidewalk reconstruction. However, it appears that the County continues to solicit bids for the materials used by County crews separately, rather than “riding” the City’s contracts. The Commission believes the County could achieve economies by using the City’s larger volume bids for these contracts.

### Implementation

This recommendation can be implemented immediately, the next time bids are solicited.

## **Library Book Purchases**

**Suburban municipal libraries should purchase books and materials through the San Antonio Public Library's contracts with vendors.**

### Rationale

Alongside the San Antonio Public Library, several of the suburban municipalities in Bexar County (Converse, Universal City and Leon Valley) support their own local municipal public libraries, at their own municipal expense. The Commission believes they might achieve some economies by “riding” San Antonio contracts for books and material purchases.

### Implementation

This requires nothing more than administrative action.



# **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CITY-COUNTY SERVICE INTEGRATION**

## **Continuing City-County Service Integration**

**The City and County should establish a follow-up City-County Service Integration Commission for a term of several years to monitor and oversee current integration projects and to facilitate future integration projects.**

### Rationale

During its research and evaluation, the Commission came to recognize a fundamental and formidable roadblock to effective City-County service integration: the differences in the internal “corporate culture” of two governments that historically have regarded each other with some degree of suspicion and dealt with each other at arm’s length. This history is aggravated by the fundamental difference in their forms of government. The City of San Antonio is a “home rule” city with a charter that allows for flexibility in how the City’s 11 elected officials govern. The County government, designed under frontier conditions following the Civil War, is a very rigid structure that allows for very few opportunities to integrate services. In addition, the County has 26 autonomous elected officials who are not effectively accountable to Commissioners Court. These radically different governmental structures have generated internal cultures that are very different and that have historically made service integration very difficult.

The Commission notes that both City and County staffs have become increasingly receptive to the potential of working together for the betterment of our community. However, we also believe that without continuing pressure from above and outside the existing bureaucracies, the impetus for continuing city-county service integration will sooner or later begin to fade. A continuing oversight body, dedicated to ensuring continuing implementation, is necessary to ensure that this report does not gather dust on a shelf.

The Commission also believes that continuing city-county service integration must be an on-going process, in which new opportunities will ripen even as old initiatives are completed. Every subcommittee of this Commission considered additional possibilities for service integration that are not contained in this report, and determined for one reason or another that the conditions are just not right to pursue the matter at this point. This suggests an annual process of re-evaluating targets and objectives for service integration, similar to the annual updating of the work program for “City-County Cooperation.”

### Implementation

The present, temporary, Commission was established by simple parallel resolutions of City Council and Commissioners Court. However, the Commission believes that a more permanent body to oversee city-county integration efforts should be based on a formal interlocal agreement. This agreement should (1) reformulate and restate the mandate to the new Commission, (2) provide for the appointment of Commission members by City Council and Commissioners Court (similarly to the present Commission), including appointments to fill vacancies, and (3) provide for continuing staff and independent consultant support for a term of three-to-five years.

## **City-County Technology Purchasing**

**The City and County should create a joint staff working group to ensure that future technology purchases are compatible between the two governments, and that they are implemented under a conscious design to facilitate future integration of services.**

### Rationale

The Commission has found that one of the most fundamental and frustrating obstacles to integration of city and county services is the incompatibility of the software purchased by the two governments for their own internal operations in isolation from each other. These systems represent major investments of taxpayer funds, and they are not easily made to work with each other when they are fundamentally incompatible from the beginning.

For example, the City and the County operate on different Criminal Justice Information Systems. Although each entity has limited access to the other's system, when the City and County integrated magistration services, the County was required to spend more than \$7,000 to upgrade technology capabilities to effectively communicate with the City. The Commission has found example after example where the principal real obstacle to the integration of services is the simple incompatibility of the software used on each side.

The City and County have recently purchased the same resource management software system. City Public Service and the San Antonio Water System also utilize this software. The opportunity exists for the four entities to develop compatible data management systems which will facilitate service integration in the future. It also creates the opportunity to develop a joint "user support group" which all of the entities can utilize, thereby improving software maintenance and functionality while reducing the costs to each.

### Implementation

The joint staff working group can be implemented by administrative action, based on parallel resolutions of City Council and Commissioners Court. A permanent joint user support group would require an interlocal agreement. Oversight of this effort should be a charge to the recommended follow-up Commission on City-County Service Integration.

## **Integration of Quality of Life Services**

**The City and County should thoroughly evaluate the feasibility of consolidating “quality of life” services such as libraries, parks and recreation, golf courses, and operation/management of cultural and sports venues on a countywide basis. A successor to this Commission should make substantive recommendations on these issues.**

### Rationale

All of these services have a common element: the benefits of the service are not captured within the boundaries of the central city. Therefore the present assignment of functions to City and County governments poses problems both of financial equity (particularly to City taxpayers) and of effectiveness in overall service delivery.

In the case of the Library, the underfunding of the City’s library system has been a matter of public concern and editorial comment for many years. Recently a proposal has been aired by the Library Board of Trustees and the Library Foundation to create a countywide library district in an effort to expand the tax base supporting the library system and to correct the inequity of double-taxing city residents to subsidize the use of the library by suburban residents. City Council has already funded a feasibility study of alternative approaches to the Library’s long-term funding needs which will examine the potential of a countywide library district in greater detail.

In the case of Parks and Recreation, the obvious duplication between the City and County parks departments has no credible explanation or rationale. The City is buying land for preservation as open space over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone (often outside the city limits), while virtually all of the County’s parks are inside the city limits – and the two systems are totally indistinguishable to the average citizen.

In the case of cultural and sports venues, the City has traditionally borne the burden of delivering services that benefit the entire metropolitan area. In recent years, however, the County has also assumed particular roles in this area – e.g., with development of the SBC Center and sponsorship of a “community fund” to benefit arts and cultural organizations. Efforts to coordinate the marketing and provision of support services to the SBC Center and the Alamodome have proven singularly unsuccessful.

The present Commission has simply not had time to explore these issues in sufficient detail to make a more definitive recommendation. However, we are convinced that these issues require further study that may result in recommendations for fundamental reorganization in these services.

### Implementation

Alternatives that might be considered include a series of separate countywide special districts for the library, parks, and cultural/sports venues or a single overall “Quality of Life” authority for all of these functions together, similar to the Harris County/Houston Sports Authority. Chapter

1432 of the Local Government Code would need to be amended to include non-sporting venues such as libraries, parks and cultural facilities.

The Commission is concerned that any new countywide special district be accountable to Commissioners Court as the County's overall elected governing body, rather than a wholly separate unit of government. Therefore we would recommend considering the model of the University Health System, whose board is appointed by Commissioners Court and whose tax rate (and therefore ultimately its budget) must be approved by Commissioners Court.

A district that is financed by a property tax would require legislation in the form of a local-interest amendment to the state constitution as well as ratification by the voters. Implementation issues would include the structure of a governing board that is effectively accountable to Commissioners Court, the transfer of the properties and staff of the City to the new district, the disposition of the City's existing and authorized debt for these functions, and the relationship between the district and related functions of suburban municipalities.

## **Marketing of City Services**

**The City should develop a regular program to analyze the costs of extending particular services to suburban municipalities and actively offer these services to them on an equitable basis.**

### Rationale

The City of San Antonio operates on a totally different scale from any of the other incorporated cities in Bexar County. It has the manpower and specialized equipment to provide the full range of municipal services through in-house forces. In contrast, the suburban cities are too small to provide many of the services they need on a “24/7” basis (for example, police, fire and EMS dispatch) through their own individual municipal structures. They are also too small to justify owning and maintaining a wide range of expensive equipment they do not use every day, in functions ranging from street sweeping to pothole repair, and from traffic sign replacement to maintenance of drainage channels. They have no practical alternative in these cases but to contract with an outside agency (either the County, another suburb or a private vendor), which is often uneconomic and requires administrative effort disproportionate to the task at hand.

In the face of this situation, the City has a very limited history of contracting with suburban cities to deliver municipal services inside their boundaries on a mutually equitable basis. The principal example is the handful of relatively long-standing contracts for EMS with several surrounded municipalities. The City has proven ill-prepared to respond to a request for a proposal to extend its fire protection to another city that is dependent on another suburb’s volunteer fire department.

It has never considered the potential to offer “menu pricing” of public works-related services that require specialized equipment. It may even be possible in some cases that the City could benefit from economies of scale in offering its services on a wider geographic basis.

A well-known model for the kind of program recommended here has been refined over many years in Los Angeles County, California – a “home rule” county that contracts with many cities within its jurisdiction to deliver a wide range of municipal services on their behalf. Full City cost recovery and avoiding “dilution” of existing City services are obviously essential to this recommendation.

### Implementation

The existing Interlocal Cooperation Act provides ample authority for the City to contract with suburban cities to deliver a wide range of municipal services on a mutually beneficial basis. However, implementation of this recommendation will require an increase in City financial analytical staff and the staff of the Intergovernmental Relations Office. These costs should ultimately be recovered as part of the overhead for a system of interlocal contracts that optimizes the integration of City and suburban municipal services.

